

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM USINT BAGHDAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2662

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 0005

KUWAIT PLEASE POUCH BEIRUT

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IZ

SUBJ: IRAQ ASSUMES PEACEMAKING ROLE IN LEBANON

1. WITH THE ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT OF IRAQI MINISTER OF INFORMATION TARIQ AZIZ IN THE LEBANESE INTERNAL SITUATION, THE GOVT CONTROLLED IRAQI PRESS SHIFTED ITS POSITION ON LEBANON FROM A HAWKISH PRO-MOSLEM LINE TO SWEET RESONABLENESS. PRESS NOW CALLING FOR LEBANESE NATIONAL UNITY SO AS TO ENHANCE LEBANON'S ARAB ROLE. A WEEK EARLIER, BAGHDAD PRESS HAS ATTACKED SYRIAN REGIME FOR DOING WHAT AZIZ IS APPARENTLY NOW TRYING TO DO. PRESS THEN ALLEGED THAT SYRIAN EFFORTS AT RECONCILIATION WERE A PLOT TO DEPRIVE THE LEFT-WING MOSLEMS OF THEIR RIGHTFUL GAINS IN BRINGING ABOUT REFORMS IN OUTMODED AND UNJUST SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ORDER IN LEBANON. PRESS NOW GIVING PROMINENCE TO STATEMENT MADE BY PRES FRANJIEH IN WHICH HE THANKED PRES BAKR AND THE IRAQI PEOPLE FOR THEIR BROTHERLY ENDEVORS TO HELP LEBANON OVERCOME ITS ORDEAL AND AFFIRMED THAT LEBANON WOULD REMEMBER WITH APPRECIATION THESE BROTHERLY ARAB INITIATIVES.

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2. COMMENTS: IRAQI REGIME SEEMS TO HAVE DECIDED THAT DISRUPTION IN LEBANON HAD REACHED POINT WHERE IT THREATENED IRAQI INTERESTS. WHILE IDEOLOGUES IN BAATH REGIME NO DOUBT STILL PRESSING FOR FOR IRAQI SUPPORT FOR LEFT WING MOSLEM REVOLUTIONARIES, MORE PRATICAL MEN AT TOP OF PARTY COMMAND HAVE APPARENTLY DECIDED THAT SITUATION SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO ESCALATE INTO BROADER CONFLICT THAT COULD THREATEN CURRENT IRAQI OBJECTIVES SUCH AS ITS ECONOMIC DEVELOPEMENT AND ITS EXPANDING COMMERICAL LINKS WITH THE WEST. WHILE THE IDEOLOGUES ARE NO DOUBT DELIGHTED THAT BEIRUT HAS BECOME UNTENABLE AS A BASE OF OPERATIONS FOR THE "INPERIALIST-CAPITALIST" PRIVATE COMPANIES, THE ECONOMIC MINISTRIES HAVE PROBABLY NOTICED WITH CONCERN THAT THESE SAME FIRMS ARE EXHIBITING SOMEWHAT LESS ENTHUSIASM FOR IRAQI PROJECTS NOW THAT THEIR OPERATIONAL PROBLEMS IN THE AREA HAVE BEEN INCREASED BY THEIR LOSS OF THEIR BEIRUT FACILITIES.

3. IN ADDITION TO THESE PRACTICAL ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS, WE SUSPECT THAT IRAQIS JUDGED TIME IS FINALLY RIPE FOR COMPROMISE AND HOPED TO GAIN KUDOS WITHIN ARAB WORLD AS PEACEMAKERS. SUCH A STATEMANLIKE ROLE COULD FURTHER THEIR CURRENT AIM OF REDUCING THEIR POLITICAL ISOLATION AND INCREASING THEIR INFULENCE IN OTHER ARAB CAPITALS. END COMMENT.
WILEY

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